

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-06

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R 130920Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9107

UNCLAS VIENTIANE 0334

FOR SCS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC LA
SUBJECT: EMERGENCY SERVICES TO AMERICAN CITIZENS: POST PROFILE

REF: SECSTATE A-0518, FEB 10, 1978

1. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PROVIDED IN REFERENCE TO THE
NUMBERED PARAGRAPHS AND LETTERED SUBPARAGRAPHS OF REF AIRGRAM.
IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS POSED IN PARAGRAPH ONE,
OFFICE HOURS: (A) 0800-1300 AND 1400 TO 1700. (B) 0830 TO 1230
MONDAYS THROUGH FRIDAYS. (C) LUNCH BREAK FROM 1300 TO 1400 WITH
NO STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT. (D) THE POST TELEPHONE NUMBER IS 3126.
(E) THE CONSULAR TELEPHONE EXTENSION IS NO. 30. (F) THERE ARE NO
CONSULAR AGENTS ATTACHED TO THE POST. (G) THE POST IS CLOSED ON
THE FOLLOWING LOCAL HOLIDAYS: APRIL 13-15 FOR LAO NEW YEAR,
MAY 01 FOR LABOR DAY, AND DECEMBER 02 FOR LAO NATIONAL DAY.

2. IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS POSED IN PARAGRAPH TWO, AFTER
HOURS COVERAGE: (A) THE POST DOES NOT HAVE A SEPARATE CONSULAR
DUTY OFFICER. (B) THE POST'S ONE CONSULAR OFFICER RECEIVES
INCOMING CABLES EVERY SATURDAY MORNING BY COMING TO THE EMBASSY.
(C) THERE IS AN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER PRESENT IN THE EMBASSY
TO ANSWER EMERGENCY CALLS AFTER THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS. (D) ALL
OF THE MENTIONED INSTITUTIONS KNOW HOW TO CONTACT THE AMERICAN
EMBASSY.

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3. IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS POSED IN PARAGRAPH 3, REGISTRATION/
NOTICE BOARDS: (A) THE EMBASSY MAINTAINS A REGISTRATION SYSTEM
OF ALL AMERICANS TRANSITING OR TEMPORARILY VISITING LAOS AND
IT IS FREQUENTLY UPDATED. (B) THE EMBASSY ONLY POSTS NOTICES
ON THE CONSULAR SECTION'S BULLETIN BOARD. DUE TO THE SENSITIVE
POLITICAL CLIMATE AND SMALL NUMBER OF AMERICAN TRAVELLERS TO

THE LPDR IT IS UNWISE TO MAINTAIN A BULLETIN BOARD AT OTHER LOCATIONS.

4. IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIOONS POSED IN PARAGRAPH 4, SEARCHING FOR MISSING PERSONS: (A) LAO EMBASSIES ABROAD DO NOT ISSUE TOURIST VISAS TO AMERICAN CITIZENS AND ONLY ISSUE OFFICIAL VISAS WHEN THEY HAVE OBTAINED PRIOR APPROVAL FROM THE LAO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THEREFORE THE LAO MFA WOULD HAVE A RECORD OF ANY AMERICAN VISITING THE LPDR. (B) DURING FY 1977 THE POST DID NOT HAVE THE OCCASION TO REQUEST THE LAO GOVERNMENT TO SEARCH ITS RECORDS FOR A MISSING AMERICAN (APART FROM THE MISSING IN ACTION ISSUE WHICH IS NOT BEING HANDLED AS A CONSULAR CASE). (C) DUE TO THE SENSITIVE POLITICAL CLIMATE, THE EMBASSY AVOIDS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE FROM THE LAO GOVERNMENT IN RESEARCHING REPLIES TO WELFARE AND WHEREABOUT CASES. THE CONSULAR OFFICER IS ABLE TO OBTAIN INFORMATION BY INFORMALLY MAKING INQUIRIES IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. (D) SEE THE ANSWER TO (C). (E) AS THE LPDR HAS A COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT AND ALL HOTELS ARE OWNED BY THE STATE, THE POST ASSUMES THAT ALL HOTELS ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT ALL ALIEN GUESTS TO THE POLICE. THE EMBASSY DOES NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION.

5. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS POSED IN PARAGRAPH 5, SEARCH AND RESCUE: (A) THERE HAVE BEEN NO SAR CASES AT THE POST IN THE PAST 2 YEARS. (B) THE HOST GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE ADEQUATE EQUIPMENT OR TRAINED PERSONNEL TO SUPPORT AN EFFECTIVE SAR UNCLASSIFIED

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EFFORT. (C) THE POLITICAL AND CONSULAR SECTIONS. (D) N/A.

6. IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS POSED IN PARAGRAPH 6, LOCAL COMMUNICATIONS: (A) IT TAKES ABOUT 30 MINUTES TO PLACE A CALL TO THE US AND RECEPTION VARIES FROM EXCELLENT TO POOR. THE DOMESTIC TELEPHONE SYSTEM IS FAIR WITHIN VIENTIANE BUT THERE ARE NO LINKS WITH PROVINCIAL CAPITALS. (B) COLLECT CALLS CAN NOT BE MADE TO THE US. (C) TELEGRAM DELIVERY-COMMERCIAL: (1) ABOUT ONE WEEK, (2) DEPENDABILITY IS FAIR, (3) CONSULAR TELEGRAMS ARE DESPATCHED IMMEDIATELY AS THE POST HAS NO TRAFFIC BACKLOG OR DISADVANTAGEOUS PRIORITY SYSTEM, (4) THE POST HAS A BACK UP GENERATOR, (5) THERE ARE NO LOCAL BANKING FACILITIES FOR THE TRANSFER OF DOLLARS IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, (6) N/A, (7) N/A (8)N/AN (9)N/A. (D) MAIL SERVICES, (1) ABOUT ONE WEEK, (2) BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MAIL ARE UNRELIABLE. (EL THERE ARE NO RADIO STATIONS AVAILABLE FOR USE BY THE AMERICAN EMBASSY.

7. IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS POSED IN PARAGRAPH 7, LOCAL TRANSPORTATION: (A) AIR TRAVEL, (1) THERE ARE TWO WEEKLY COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS TO BANGKOK AND A THIRD FLIGHT WILL

BEGIN APRIL 03, 1978. AEROFLOT MAKES ONE WEEKLY FLIGHT TO RANGOON, (2) COMMERCIAL AIRLINES ARE COOPERATIVE, (3) LEAVING "CALL CONSUL" NOTES ARE NOT FEEASIBLE (B) ROAD SITUATION, (1) THE SECURITY SITUATION IN LAOS IS BAD AND NO FOREIGNER IS PERMITTED OUTSIDE OF THE VIENTIANE CITY LIMITS WITHOUT SPECIAL PERMISSION FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. VIENTIANE ROADS ARE FREQUENTLY PATROLLED BY THE ARMY AND POLICE. (2) THERE ARE VERY FEW HOTELS IN THE CONSULAR DISTRICT. (C) THERE ARE NO RAILROADS IN THE LPDR. (D) FOREIGNERS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO TRAVEL ON THE BUS LINES WHICH LINK PROVINCIAL CITIES. (E) THERE ARE NO CAR RENTAL AGENCIES IN LAOS.
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